

STATE OF NEVADA

# “Miles to Go”

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## Annual Report of the State of Public Education



**Dale A.R. Erquiaga, Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
**January 31, 2014**

This report to the Governor and Legislature fulfills the statutory requirement that the Department provide an overview of the state of public education in Nevada. It summarizes certain activities in 2013 and School Year 2012-13, with an acknowledgement that the State is in the midst of a major reform effort focused on college and career readiness for all students.

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## Introduction

Pursuant to NRS 385.230, the Nevada Department of Education prepares an annual report of the state of public education in this State. The report has historic roots and many similarities over time. For many years, Nevada's elected superintendents of public instruction used the annual report to highlight not only the current status of schooling, but also their proposed vision for the future of the system. For example, reflecting on the need for more effective educators as long ago as 1917, Superintendent John Edwards Bray complained that the State's plan for teacher preparation had failed. "I recommend the repeal of the present law and the substitution of some plan to promote training at the State University," he wrote. "Such training at the University would cost less, give a broader personal and professional viewpoint to the prospective teacher, and bring to our schools teachers with a richer professional experience."

The 2014 Annual Report comes at a time when the State, local school districts, and charter schools have embarked upon an almost unprecedented era of change. Not since the 1950s has Nevada's K-12 public education system undergone so many changes at one time. Governor Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature have enacted significant reforms – from a new State governance model to different accountability frameworks. Nevada educators are working to align standards and assessments around a college and career readiness focus that will better prepare our students for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the same time, every level of the system is responding to the current needs of a diverse population while working to ensure opportunities for all students; educator effectiveness remains as high a priority today as it did in the 1917 report referenced above.

At the Department of Education, we view 2014 as a watershed year. We are busy ensuring the successful implementation of numerous reforms, while at the same time setting a new baseline for how the future of K-12 public education will unfold and its successes will be measured. It is with apologies to Robert Frost, therefore, that this annual report is published under the title "Miles to Go." While much progress has been made, the system over which the Nevada Department of Education presides continues to fail too many of our students and provides insufficient support for too many educators. We can and must celebrate success where it is found. We must also rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the promise that all Nevadans are ready for success in the years ahead. On the pages of this report is a snapshot of the current state of public education. An accompanying document, the *2014 Annual Plan to Improve the Achievement of Pupils*, contains a preliminary roadmap for improving the state of the system. Both are only the beginning.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

*From "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"  
by Robert Frost*

## Annual Reports of Accountability

The Nevada Department of Education prepares and makes available two primary sources of demographic and performance accountability data:

- The **Nevada Report Card**, a compilation of information prepared by the State Board required by federal and state law, provides a detailed overview of the successes and shortcomings of Nevada’s public schools. The information is available online at [www.nevadareportcard.com](http://www.nevadareportcard.com) and contains customizable reports on topics ranging from cohort graduation rates to personnel status.
- The **Nevada School Performance Framework**, a rating system for most public schools, creates an index score based on several performance indicators. The resulting “star system” ratings have replaced the old federal Adequate Yearly Progress labels, pursuant to a waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012. The Framework and star ratings for each school can be accessed at <http://nspf.doe.nv.gov>.

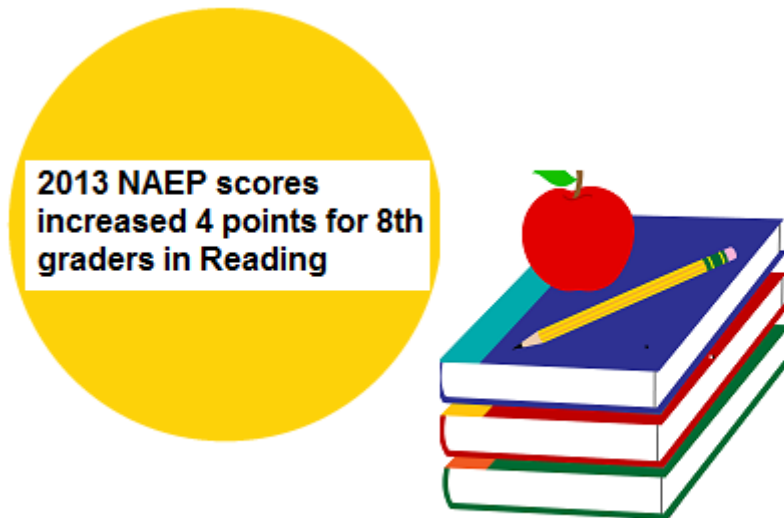
With the ready availability of so much data, it is not necessary to repeat information in this annual report; rather, it is instructive to reflect on certain key points that frame the state of public education in the Silver State as we enter our Sesquicentennial Year.

**Nevada’s Schools Are Incredibly Diverse:** Nevada has one of the most diverse student populations in the nation. Within this diverse population, Nevada also has one of the highest percentages of English language learner (ELL) students in public schools. From 2009-10 to 2010-11, Nevada experienced a 3% gain in ELL students, the largest seen in any state.<sup>1</sup>

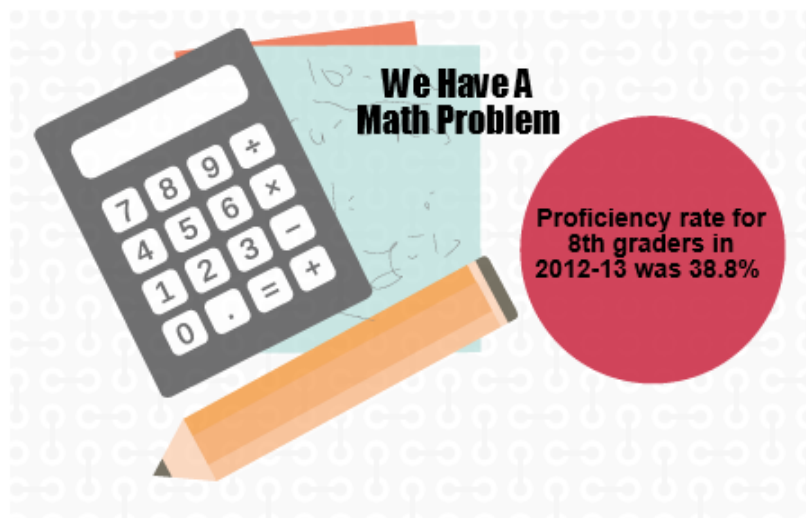


<sup>1</sup> National Center on Education Statistics, “English Language Learners,” *Condition of Education* (2013), [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe\\_cgf.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cgf.pdf) (accessed January 16, 2014).

**Gains In Reading Have Been Made:** Reading proficiency rates have steadily increased over the last two years. Nevada is one of only 11 states that showed a statistically significant gain in NAEP reading scores for 8<sup>th</sup> graders between 2011 and 2013.<sup>2</sup>



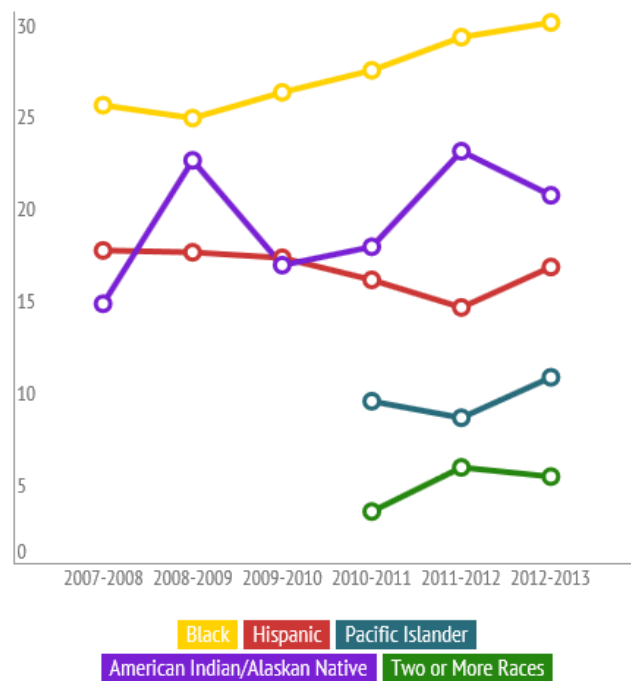
**We Have a Math Problem:** Math proficiency rates declined in 2012-13 for Nevada students in grades 6 through 8. Additionally, student performance in math has generally lagged behind student performance in reading.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2013). 2013 Nevada NAEP Math and Reading Scores Released. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013\\_Press\\_Releases/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013_Press_Releases/).

<sup>3</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2014). "Nevada Ready! Annual Plan to Improve the Achievement of Pupils," p. 6, Figure 3.

**Achievement Gaps Remain:** Despite an overall increase in performance of Nevada’s students over the past five years, a performance gap still exists between ethnic groups. In addition, a significant difference exists between nearly all ethnic groups compared to Whites.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2014). “Nevada Ready! Annual Plan to Improve the Achievement of Pupils,” p. 4, Figure 1.

**Little Progress Is Seen With One-Star Schools:** The number of one-star schools reported in the Nevada School Performance Framework was unchanged between school years 2011-12 and 2012-13.<sup>5</sup>



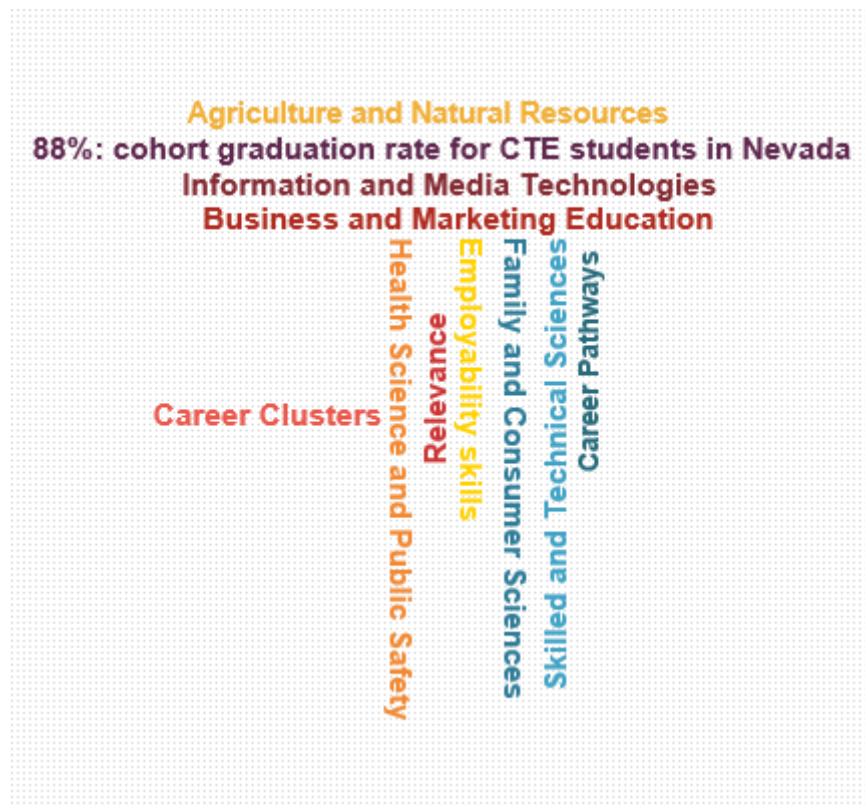
**Five Star Schools Declined:** In 2013, fewer schools received a five-star rating in the Nevada School Performance Framework report.<sup>6</sup> A five-star rating represents high performance across all indicators of student achievement, including student proficiency, student growth, reduction of achievement gaps, college and career readiness, and graduation.



<sup>5</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2013). NDE Releases School Accountability Reports. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013\\_Press\\_Releases/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013_Press_Releases/).

<sup>6</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2013). NDE Releases School Accountability Reports. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013\\_Press\\_Releases/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/2013_Press_Releases/).

**Career and Technical Education Works:** The Department’s Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (CTE) serves a breadth of students who are focused on more technical academic experiences as they grow into individuals who are college and career ready. CTE students have consistently higher graduation rates than the general student population in Nevada. Additionally, there appears to be a trend for CTE students to have slightly higher scores on the High School Proficiency Exam.<sup>7</sup>

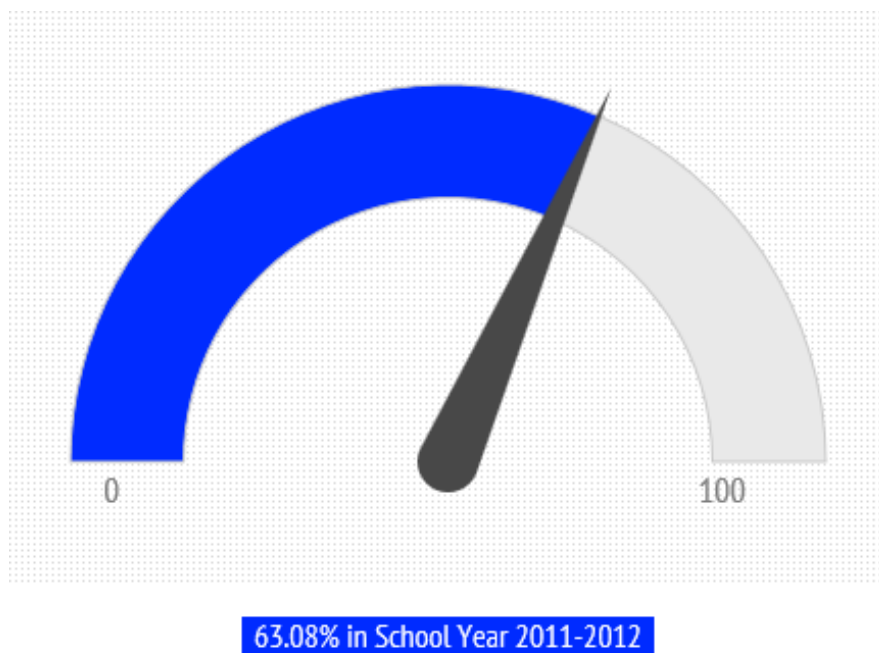


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<sup>7</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2014). “Nevada Ready! Annual Plan to Improve the Achievement of Pupils,” pp. 10-12.



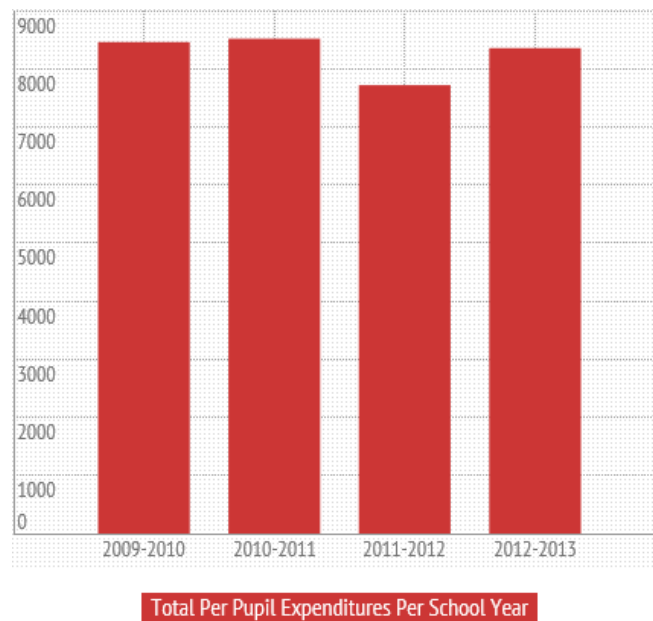
**Graduation Rates Are Improving:** Graduation rates are gradually improving. Nevada has experienced a 7.4% increase in its graduation rate between 2000 and 2010, the 17<sup>th</sup> greatest increase in the nation.<sup>8</sup>



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<sup>8</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2014). Education Week Releases *Quality Counts 2014* Report. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.nv.gov/News\\_Media/Press\\_Releases/2014/01-09-2014\\_Quality\\_Counts/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/News_Media/Press_Releases/2014/01-09-2014_Quality_Counts/).

**Per-Pupil Expenditures Remain Fairly Constant:** The average per pupil expenditure across the state has remained fairly constant over the last three years.<sup>9</sup>



## Vision and Mission

During the period 2012-13, the Nevada Department of Education expressed its vision and mission through a variety of statements. Vision was alternately stated as “Success through learning” or the more process-oriented “Inspiring a better educated Nevada through effective policies.” Mission was consistently expressed through the statement “To elevate student performance by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence.”

In each instance, the Department has been properly focused on the future of Nevada and the programs and initiatives of the K-12 public education system that are designed to propel students and educators toward that future. The State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction have focused on the advancement of more rigorous academic standards, aligned assessments, and the development of new performance frameworks for schools and educators alike. A deep commitment to the success of all students – including those with disabilities, those who live in poverty, those within racial and ethnic subgroups, and those with limited proficiency in English – has remained at the forefront of Department initiatives. A focus on college and career readiness is paramount.

<sup>9</sup> Nevada Department of Education. (2014). Nevada Report Card. Retrieved from [http://www.nevadareportcard.com/di/report/reportcard\\_1?report=reportcard\\_1&scope=e9.y10.y5.y6.y7&organization=c2269&fields=309%2C310%2C311%2C313&hiddenfieldsid=309%2C310%2C311%2C313&scores=610%2C615&num=160&page=1&pagesize=20&domain=fiscalinfo&](http://www.nevadareportcard.com/di/report/reportcard_1?report=reportcard_1&scope=e9.y10.y5.y6.y7&organization=c2269&fields=309%2C310%2C311%2C313&hiddenfieldsid=309%2C310%2C311%2C313&scores=610%2C615&num=160&page=1&pagesize=20&domain=fiscalinfo&).

For 2014, the Department has retooled its vision and mission statements to more fully embrace the “readiness” goal, as well as to reposition the agency as a support institution for students and educators alike:

#### Vision

“All Nevadans ready for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

#### Mission

To improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence.

## Goals and Benchmarks

Perhaps due to the rate of change in the Superintendent’s Office over the last two years, the Department’s stated goals and benchmarks have evolved. The chart below details the status of the most recent goal statements, as identified in the 2013 State Improvement Plan. As required by law, an analysis of progress made in achieving the goals and benchmarks is included below.

| GOAL  | PROGRESS MADE   |
|---|---|
| Elevate student achievement so that all students graduate college- and career-ready.  | Incremental gains in reading have been recorded, but math proficiency continues to lag; increases will be reported for the 2103 cohort graduation rate.   |
| Improve equity in schooling so all students have the opportunity for success.   | Nevada’s achievement gap remains, with certain subgroups faring worse in recent accountability reports.   |
| Ensure Nevada’s students are educated by effective teachers and administrators.   | The Nevada Educator Performance Framework will undergo a validation study in 2014, with a decision to follow on whether the Framework’s components are ready for use in high-stakes personnel decisions; information can be used for professional development purposes even if the Framework is not used for personnel decisions. |
| Support and expand innovative programs and educational choices that improve learning.   | The State Public Charter School Authority has seen legislative approval of loan funding and other mechanisms designed to improve school choice options.   |
| Increase productivity and return on investment.   | District-level spending on operations (outside of the classroom) declined during the recession but has recently increased slightly.   |
| Strengthen the public’s regard for the state’s education system through a strategic partnership of the Department of Education, State Board and Governor. | Our partnership is strong and all entities are focused on demonstrating that Nevada’s schools are preparing all students for success; increased communication efforts are underway.   |

For 2014, the Department has revised and consolidated a number of existing goal statements into four Strategic Priorities, listed here:

- Implement standards, programs, and assessments that prepare all students for college and careers.
- Facilitate high-impact instruction and leadership through measurement and support of educator effectiveness and family engagement.
- Evaluate and publicize school, district, and state performance and assign rewards, technical assistance, and interventions.
- Continually improve Departmental leadership and collaboration with all stakeholders.

The Department's goal statements will be used and further refined as the Department revisits the Five-Year Strategic Plan. In addition, the Department will be setting new targets to drive action on the following goals and benchmarks (as outlined in NRS 385.3593):

| Goals  | Benchmarks<br>(current status based on available data)   |                            |                    |
|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Improve proficiency results in core academic subjects.                           |  | <u>% Proficient</u>        | <u>% Above AMO</u> |
|  | Grade 4 Reading  | 70.6%                      | 3.2%               |
|  | Grade 4 Math   | 73.5%                      | 1.9%               |
|  | Grade 8 Reading  | 50.0%                      | -9.9%              |
|  | Grade 8 Math   | 38.8%                      | -10.2%             |
|  | Grade 8 Science  | 53.7%                      | -6.2%              |
|  | Grade 11 Reading   | 79.8%                      | -1.7%              |
|  | Grade 11 Math  | 75.9%                      | -2.1%              |
|  | Grade 11 Science   | 76.4%                      | -5.1%              |
|  | Increase number of pupils enrolled in public middle schools and junior high schools, including charter schools, who enter public high schools with the skills necessary to succeed in high school. | No uniform measure exists. |                    |
| Improve the cohort graduation rate.  | 63.08 % (2012)   |                            |                    |
| Improve the performance of pupils on standardized college entrance examinations. | ACT: Nevada’s Graduating Class of 2013 earned an average composite score of 21.3.  |                            |                    |
|  | SAT: Nevada’s Graduating Class of 2013 earned and average Critical Reading score of 492, average Mathematics score of 494, and an average Writing score of 468.                                    |                            |                    |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Increase the percentage of pupils enrolled in high schools who enter postsecondary educational institutions.   | 63.2 % (2011)  |
| Increase the percentage of pupils who are college and career ready as measured on 11 <sup>th</sup> grade assessment.   | No measure exists.   |
| Increase the percentage of pupils who are college and career ready as measured by a decrease in the college remediation rate.  | 31.6 percent of all recent Nevada high school graduates who attended an NSHE institution were enrolled in at least one remedial course (2012). |
| Re-engage disengaged youth who have dropped out of high school or who are at risk of dropping out of high school, including a mechanism for tracking and maintaining communication with those youth who have dropped out of school or who are at risk of doing so. | No uniform measure exists.   |

## Standards and Examinations

Nevada has demonstrated significant leadership in embracing a reform agenda to adopt and implement college and career readiness standards, with an aligned strategy that will transition the public schools to new, high-quality assessments. In 2010, the Nevada Council on Academic Standards and the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, now part of the Nevada Academic Content Standards. The full implementation of these standards will be completed in 2014 as math is fully aligned. A recent analysis by a Steering Committee empaneled by Governor Sandoval identified several steps that need to be taken in the coming year, particularly with regard to professional development, instructional materials, the transition from high school, and communications about the overall initiative. As local districts fully adapt their courses and refine training to fully deliver instruction in the new standards, the Department will provide technical support and additional assistance. We recognize the instructional shifts that are required to fully embrace the new standards and are committed to help classroom teachers and building administrators make the adjustment.

The Council on Academic Standards has recently recommended adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards, which will be considered by the State Board in 2014. At the same time, Nevada has adopted new Career and Technical Education (CTE) standards in the following program areas: Agricultural and Natural Resources, Business and Marketing Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Sciences and Public Safety, Information and Media Technologies, and Skilled and Technical Sciences.

With all the new standards comes a comprehensive assessment system that will improve upon traditional assessments so that students' in-depth knowledge can be better measured. Nevada will replace the existing Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) in grades 3-8 during the 2014-15 school year; field testing of the new assessments will occur in Spring 2014. (Nevada is a governing state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and will use those tests for ELA and math in grades 3-8, as well as its own science exam in grades 5 and 8.) At the same time, Nevada is moving to end-of-course examinations in high school and has refined its end-of-program technical assessments in CTE; the State Board has not yet identified the courses of study for the end-of-course exams. Nevada will phase out the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) with the graduating class of 2016.

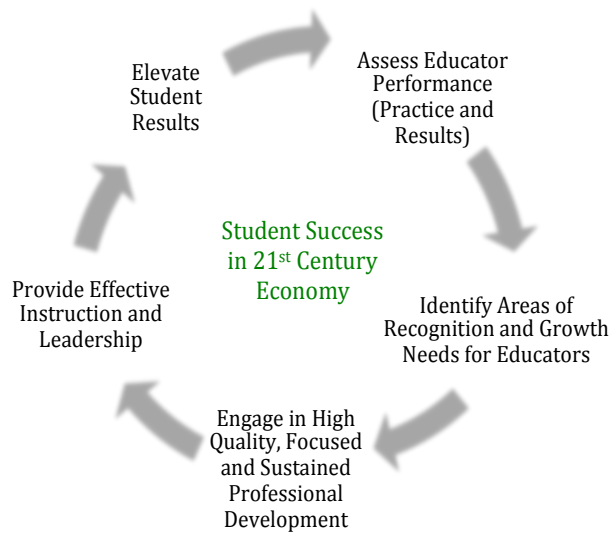
The Department has carefully managed the transition from CRTs and the HSPE, both as the new standards have been brought online and as the change to new assessments takes place. During this transition, test items were "double coded" to ensure alignment between the old and new standards, and up to 15 percent of old items were replaced with items solely aligned to the new standards. Further enhancements to the overall assessment system are the Employability Skills for Career Readiness Assessment used in CTE and the college and career readiness assessment to be selected by the State Board this year.

The new program of internationally-benchmarked standards and high-quality assessments will help ensure that Nevada students are receiving an education that is appropriate to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and will help guarantee their ultimate success in college and/or careers. There will certainly be adjustments – possibly even declines – in reported performance and proficiency in these first few years of transition, but the Department remains steadfast in the belief that we are establishing a new and more relevant baseline of accountability data and levels of student achievement.

## **Effective Teachers and Principals**

The primary data about educator effectiveness currently collected and reported by the Department of Education focuses on two factors: Average Daily Attendance and Highly Qualified Status (defined by the No Child Left Behind Act as holding a minimum of a bachelor's degree, licensed to teach in Nevada, and having demonstrated competence in the teaching area). In both instances, the story is a positive one.

Of perhaps greater importance, however, is what the existing data sets do not tell us about our classroom teachers and building administrators. Limited information (other than cost) is reported about professional development, for example, and linkages between educator and student performances are nonexistent. The development of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) will change all that by enhancing human capital to elevate student performance.



The NEPF will undergo a validation study in 2014 to determine if the standards and indicators set forth in the new framework are valid and can be observed in a normal school situation. Once fully deployed, the NEPF will provide information for professional development improvements and give statewide information on whether educators are highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective. Each educator's review will eventually be linked to student achievement data and observations to determine if the desired standards and indicators are being met. However, the new system will not be used for high stakes evaluations in 2013-14.

## Automated System of Accountability Information

The Department has established and maintains an automated system of accountability information, commonly referred to as the State Accountability Information Network (SAIN) or the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). On the whole, the system performs well and meets statutory requirements, with two exceptions:

- The capacity to identify which teachers are assigned to individual pupils in order to evaluate educator effectiveness; and
- The capacity to access financial accountability information for each public school, including, without limitation, each charter school, for each school district and for this State as a whole.

Neither of these requirements can be met with the current system. In recent years, the Department and its stakeholders have focused on the need for the SLDS to communicate between agencies and share data about the lifelong learning habits and successes of all students – namely, to partner with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR). Connections to pre-K student data are also envisioned as a key component necessary to meet future needs. The Department obtained a

federal grant in 2012 to begin this work and the Legislature provided additional funding in 2013. As stated in a recent SLDS feasibility study report:

*“Nevada’s goal of this grant project is to develop a Matching Data Hub (MDH) for assigning a Unique State Personal Identifier (USPI) to individuals so that students and teachers can be followed throughout their enrollment in PreK-12 and postsecondary education and into the workforce. In order to best serve the education and workforce needs of Nevada, it is imperative that stakeholders are able to follow the transition of students from Pre-K through postsecondary education and/or workforce.”*

Information from the feasibility study will be used in 2014 for the next phase of SLDS improvements, a “hub” for data sharing. The Department, NSHE, DETR and the P20W Advisory Council will remain involved with this project, and it is expected that reports to the Governor and to the 2015 Legislature may result in further progress toward the data-sharing goal and overall system improvement.

## **Lowest Performing Schools**

NDE determines the schools most in need of assistance by reviewing the data that was used to determine their respective designations: Priority, School Improvement Grant (SIG), Focus, and 1-Star. Focus schools are designated based upon gaps between groups of students at the school (IEP, LEP, and FRL) and appropriate interventions are identified to meet the instructional needs of the group(s) of students whose performance leads to the school’s designation. Priority, SIG, and 1-Star schools are generally identified because of low achievement issues at the entire school and therefore these schools must implement more comprehensive and intensive interventions.

The Nevada Education Performance System requires the Department to differentiate its system of recognition, accountability, and support for schools in response to demonstrated data-based needs. This approach aligns federal and state resources, including interventions, to support schools with the most significant needs. During 2013-14, the first year of full implementation of the Nevada Education Performance System, a collaborative process exists between the NDE and school districts as various needs and corresponding funding sources are identified to support those needs. Information will be shared through various meetings with district program and fiscal staff and through dissemination of regularly updated FAQs on the NDE School Improvement Resources website at:

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Office\\_Educational\\_Opportunity\\_SI\\_Resources](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Office_Educational_Opportunity_SI_Resources).

As part of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) and ESEA Waiver, the Department is also charged with monitoring: 1) grantees’ implementation of SIG/Priority plans, and 2) grantees’ progress toward accomplishing SIG/Priority plan goals.

The chart on the following page identifies the 41 lowest performing schools in Nevada; in addition, there are many 2-Star schools receiving support and interventions.



| SCHOOL NAME               | DISTRICT      | LEVEL | Priority | Focus | 1 Star | SIG-served |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|------------|
| 100 Academy of Excellence | Clark         | ES    |          | X     | X      |            |
| Amargosa                  | Nye           | ES    | X        |       | X      | X          |
| Beacon Academy            | State Charter | HS    |          |       | X      |            |
| Caliente                  | Lincoln       | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Cambeiro                  | Clark         | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| Canyon Springs            | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        | X          |
| Carlin                    | Elko          | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| Carlin                    | Elko          | MS    |          |       | X      |            |
| Chaparral                 | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        | X          |
| Corbett                   | Washoe        | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Craig                     | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Del Sol                   | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        |            |
| Delta Charter             | Clark         | MS    |          |       | X      |            |
| Desert Pines              | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        | X          |
| Diaz                      | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Fitzgerald                | Clark         | ES    |          | X     | X      |            |
| Gabbs                     | Nye           | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| Hug                       | Washoe        | HS    |          | X     |        |            |
| I Can Do Anything         | Washoe        | HS    |          |       | X      |            |
| Innovations               | Clark         | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| Kelly                     | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Lowman                    | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Manch                     | Clark         | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| McDermitt                 | Humboldt      | MS    |          |       | X      |            |
| McDermitt                 | Humboldt      | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| McGill                    | White Pine    | ES    |          | X     | X      |            |
| Mojave                    | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        | X          |
| Owyhee                    | Elko          | ES    |          | X     | X      |            |
| Owyhee                    | Elko          | MS    |          | X     |        |            |
| Paradise                  | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Pershing County           | Pershing      | MS    |          | X     | X      |            |
| Petersen                  | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Reed                      | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Schurz                    | Mineral       | ES    |          |       | X      |            |
| Silver State              | State Charter | MS    |          |       | X      |            |
| Squires                   | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |
| Valley                    | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        |            |
| Washoe Innovations        | Washoe        | HS    | X        |       | X      |            |
| West Prep                 | Clark         | MS    |          | X     |        |            |
| Western                   | Clark         | HS    | X        |       |        | X          |
| Williams (Tom)            | Clark         | ES    |          | X     |        |            |

## **Interventions for 1-Star Schools**

The NDE works with local school districts to specify which of the following targeted interventions must be applied to their lowest performing 1-Star schools:

- Participation in statewide SAGE school improvement planning process, creating a 1-Star Improvement Plan
- Required engagement of district leaders to support school in uniform school improvement planning and monitoring of implementation through the NDE's established eNOTE system (i.e., WestEd Tracker platform)
- Prescribed use of core instructional materials
- Prescribed scheduling
- Collaboration with districts and local educational associations to negotiate collective bargaining agreements and engage national resources for school turnaround
- Required visits to model sites and provision of embedded professional development that aligns with strategies, including coaching and mentoring if determined necessary through data analysis
- Differentiated supports negotiated by the NDE and the LEA, with a focus on capacity building of school and LEA educational leaders, including engagement in University of Virginia school turnaround leadership program
- Personnel changes including teaching faculty and/or leadership as recommended by LEA and approved by the NDE
- Imposed turnaround principles
- Reopening of schools using different delivery models

## **Targeted Supports for Focus and Priority Schools**

As guided by current learning through the School Improvement Grant (SIG) work, the NDE is committed to partnering with districts and external technical assistance experts toward the development of turnaround leaders who possess requisite competencies to engage in rapid whole school reform. These partnerships will include efforts for:

- Building transformative turnaround leadership that includes:
  - ✓ Goal-setting and planning
  - ✓ Resource allocation and management
  - ✓ Engagement with the school community to ensure active involvement in the turnaround process
  - ✓ Recognition of improvement
- Promoting a school-wide, data-focused culture to:
  - ✓ Understand student needs
  - ✓ Devise solutions
  - ✓ Inform decision making
  - ✓ Monitor impact of programs
  - ✓ Modify and make adjustments as needed

- ✓ Guide continuous improvement
- Improving instructional effectiveness by:
  - ✓ Developing a common core of practice
  - ✓ Promoting reflective practice
  - ✓ Promoting research-based instructional strategies
  - ✓ Differentiating instruction and targeting students who need extra support
- Improving school climate and culture:
  - ✓ Address high absences and tardiness
  - ✓ Promote behavior management programs
  - ✓ Increase parent and community engagement

## Innovative Educational Programs

State law requires this report to contain a summary of innovative programs targeting the improvement of our diverse student population. The Nevada Department of Education houses the Office of Educational Opportunity, whose function is to focus on the needs of traditionally underserved populations and to ensure that both State and federal funds are used to provide equitable services to all student populations in the state. These activities include providing professional development that is focused on the needs of the diverse learner. A complete list of Educational Opportunity and public school innovations is not possible here; three population groups have been selected for this report as a sampling of our work and inspiration for more success with other students.

### Best Practices for English Language Learners (ELLs)

#### *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)*

Nevada adopted WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards in 2011-12 and implemented the WIDA ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) statewide in 2012-13. Also, WIDA is developing a suite of assessment tools for Pre-K (age 2.5-5.5) to help practitioners understand, support, and monitor Dual Language Learners' progress in English language development over time. Nevada will do the field testing of this assessment in 2014-15. In addition, the Department has engaged in a five-year collaborative partnership project with the WIDA's professional development team focusing on building partnerships to support, instruct, and assess English language learners.

#### *Carson City School District (CCSD)*

The CCSD has a strong leadership team that invests in, supports, and engages English Language Learners. The CCSD requires all district instructional personnel to participate in Level I High Quality Sheltered Instruction (HQSI) professional development. The district provides ongoing professional development, HQSI Levels II and III, throughout the year for those interested in deepening their knowledge and practice and/or pursuing TESL endorsement. In 2012-13, of the district's 1,150 English Language Learners, 928 (81%) of them received English instruction from

TESL endorsed teachers. One hundred and twenty-four (70%) of the district's secondary ELL students received content instruction from core content teachers with a TESL endorsement.

## **Best Practices for Students With Disabilities**

### *Instructional Consultation Teams (ICT)*

Since the 2006-07 school year, 52 schools across seven school districts have implemented the Instructional Consultation Teams concept. Six of those districts have adopted the use of ICT district wide. Over the years, the Department has coordinated efforts with ICAT Resources to provide in-depth, high quality professional development to over 558 teachers across those seven districts. We have conducted several leadership summits for both district level leaders as well as school principals. This year we will work with the principals on how they can utilize and align the ICT process with the new Nevada Educator Performance Framework. Dr. Gene Hall and Dr. Ed Cafferella, our outside evaluators of this innovation concluded: *Implementation of the Instructional Consultation Team Model has been well worth the effort and expense. It makes significant differences in all students learning. It develops expert knowledge and skill in using evidence-based practices in teachers. The new knowledge and skills are being applied with all students and in future years. In addition, the acquired professional knowledge and skills has contributed to many teachers and leaders obtaining new positions with greater responsibilities and wider impacts. IC also provides the mechanism for constructing a true professional learning organization culture.*

## **National Best Practice for At-Risk High School Students**

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a state-based national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who are most at-risk, often due to poverty and related issues, and often representing racial minority populations. In more than three decades of operation, JAG has delivered consistent, compelling results – helping nearly three-quarters of a million young people stay in school through graduation, pursue postsecondary education, and secure quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities.

Nevada joined the 32-state JAG National Network in July of 2012 under the leadership of Governor Brian Sandoval. The primary impetus for bringing JAG to Nevada was to establish a highly accountable and tested program in the schools that is dedicated full-time to intensively focused support of students with a high probability of leaving the education system before high school completion. Five sites in Nevada (three in southern and two in northern Nevada) began full program implementation during the first semester of the 2012-13 school year and two additional programs came online in the second semester. The 2013 Legislature reviewed the progress of these early programs and accepted Governor Sandoval's request to expand the JAG program in Nevada. State General Fund dollars were appropriated, added to the federal Workforce Investment dollars already in play, and JAG has seen a major expansion in School Year 2013-14. Today JAG operates in Nevada in six high schools and one middle school. Ten schools in Clark County School District are scheduled to implement JAG at the beginning of the second semester this year. It is anticipated that JAG will expand into more schools and districts in School Year 2014-15.

## Corrective Action

NRS 385.175 provides that the Superintendent of Public Instruction may request a plan of corrective action from the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school if he determines that a requirement of the laws governing K-12 public education has not been met.

No plans of corrective action were requested in 2013.

## Conclusion

Nevada's K-12 system of public education enters the state's Sesquicentennial Year in the midst of great change. The Governor and Legislature have charged the Department of Education with overseeing the implementation of new standards, assessments, and accountability measures, as well as new programs focused on literacy, early learning, English Language Learners, and a host of other topics. The system will pivot this year toward a future course that is focused on college and career readiness for all learners, effective administrators and classroom teachers, and a Department that is ready, willing, and able to provide technical assistance and support, as well as to ensure compliance with relevant federal and state laws.

We recognize and applaud the incremental gains in student achievement made in recent years, and the tireless service of Nevada's educator workforce. We also acknowledge that great challenges remain if we are to ensure that all Nevadans are ready for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This period in our state's history should be recognized as a time when great gains were made, a new system was created, and a pathway of success was established for a new generation of students. We have miles to go, yes, but the promise of public education remains ever in view.

Respectfully submitted,

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